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ABSTRACT

People living in different parts of the world hold diverse beliefs about the nature and the nurturing of infants. Celebrating that diversity and based on the research of anthropologists, psychologists, and historians, this book presents information on child care from seven societies around the world, past and present, illustrating how the childrearing customs of any given society make sense when understood within the context of that society. The seven societies include the Puritans of seventeenth century Massachusetts and six contemporary societies: the Beng of Ivory Coast, the Balinese of Indonesia, Muslim villagers in Turkey, the Warlpiri (an Australian Aborigine group), the Fulani of West and Central Africa, and the Ifaluk people of Micronesia. Following an introductory chapter, each chapter is written in the style of a child care manual. Each "manual" starts with a brief biography of its fictive author, followed by advice to prospective and new parents on a wide range of topics. The chapters are: (1) "If Dr. Spock Were Born in Bali: Raising a World of Babies" (Judy S. DeLoache and Alma Gottlieb), focusing on the challenges of caring for children, cultural foundations of infant care practices, and valued personal characteristics; (2) "A Parenting Manual, with Words of Advice for Puritan Mothers" (Debbie Reese); (3) "Luring Your Child into This Life: A Beng Path for Infant Care" (Alma Gottlieb); (4) "Gift from the Gods: A Balinese Guide to Early Child Rearing" (Marissa Diener); (5) "Making Babies in a Turkish Village" (Carol Delaney); (6) "Infants of the Dreaming: A Warlpiri Guide to Child Care" (Sophia L. Pierroutsakos); (7) "The View from the 'Wuro': A Guide to Child Rearing for Fulani Parents" (Michelle C. Johnson); and (8) "Never Leave Your Little One Alone: Raising an Ifaluk Child" (Huynh-Nhu Le). The book concludes with citations and sources cited. (KB)

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